



Volunteer View

(A newsletter for IDNR State Park and Reservoirs Volunteers who have dedicated 50 + hours and are still active. Thank You!)



Summer 2015

Improving Habitat with Partners for the Youth

Article and photos submitted by Jason Hickman, Patoka Lake, Property Manager

The Division of State Parks manages many diverse properties from the beaches of Indiana Dunes to the hilly properties of the Ohio River such as Clifty Falls and Falls of the Ohio. Each one of these properties offers a wide variety of cultural, historical and stunning scenery for Hoosiers to explore and enjoy. In between these areas the Division of State Parks manages eight large lake areas including Salamonie, Mississinewa, Cagles Mill (Lieber State Recreation Area), Cecil M. Harden (Raccoon Lake), Brookville, Hardy, Monroe and Patoka Lakes.

These large reservoir properties, owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (except Hardy Lake) and leased to the state have three important roles: flood control, recreation, and resource management that provides habitat and hunting opportunities. Many of these properties partner with conservation groups to improve habitat and provide opportunities that introduce young people to the outdoors and to hunting.



Patoka Lake staff members, along with the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF), have worked very closely together in the past few years to improve habitat and increase access for youth hunters. This has been accomplished with matching grants from the NWTF.

Continued on page 2....

Improving Habitat continued...

Members of the Patoka Valley Limbhangers, a NWTf Chapter, approached us at Patoka Lake about conducting a Youth Turkey Hunt during the youth season. We were very pleased to assist with this endeavor. Members of the Patoka Valley Limbhangers worked with Patoka Lake wildlife specialist Todd Eubank to scout areas of the property so that our youth hunters would have success in seeing birds. In all, fifteen members of the Patoka Valley Limbhangers donated 496 hours to scout, prepare, instruct firearm safety, and pass along a piece of our hunting heritage to the next generation in this event. Two Toms were harvested during the Youth Hunt and every youth saw or heard birds gobbling in the woods.



As we have evolved into a culture of technology the number of youth getting involved outdoors has diminished. Memories were created during this event, and hopefully a new generation of sportsman is excited and encouraged about taking the field in future hunting seasons.

As the property manager at Patoka Lake, I want to express my gratitude for the partnership with the Patoka Valley Limbhangers that made this a successful hunt for everyone involved. Without chapter members volunteering their time, this event would not have taken place. The staff at Patoka Lake looks forward to working together in the future on additional efforts to maintain our hunting heritage at Patoka Lake.



Updating State Parks Trails with Technology

State Parks volunteer Mike Phillips is on a mission to update the State Parks' miles of trails with the latest GPS coordinates. He has already hiked Ouabache, Clifty Falls, Versailles, Brookville Lake and Fort Harrison. Mike works closely with property staff to get a clear idea of the trails before he ventures out. Since each property has miles of trails, Mike has to make several return trips to complete the data work. Brookville Lake alone has a total of 33 miles of trails! Mike has hiked about 168 miles in 13 different properties over the last few years.

Once he collects all the GPS data he emails it to Steve Morris, Director of DNR Outdoor Recreation. The data is compared with outdated coordinates to improve future maps and trail work. Mike says he enjoys volunteering for the DNR and that it is rewarding to hike with the purpose of improving the data in the online trail inventory.

Thanks for all your work Mike!



Above and right are pictures of Mike at the beginning and end of Wolf Creek trail at Brookville Lake.



Left– GPS work from Versailles State Park shows how outdated some maps are. Red lines are the updated GPS coordinates from Mike's work compared to the old data in yellow.

View more trail maps at the Indiana Trails Inventory

<http://www.in.gov/dnr/outdoor/4240.htm>

Better Signage Thanks to Friends

Submitted by Bill Dallman, Secretary/Treasurer, Friends of Versailles State Park

The first of the new trail head signs along with its new informational kiosk has now been erected at Versailles State Park. It is located along the park drive that enters Campground A at the place where the hiking trail heads north into the forest. The trail head signs were first designed by the Friends of VSP and then edited and finished by a graphics expert from the DNR. The attractive kiosk was designed and built by the staff of the Versailles State Park. The kiosk is beautifully built from solid white oak that was harvested here in the park. The cost of the mill work and processing of the wood was paid by the Friends of VSP. This sign itself, along with the other trail head signs, were funded by the Ripley County Tourism Bureau.

Formerly VSP hiking trails were designated and identified by the number 1,2, or 3. As these new trail head signs are erected, the trail name will be changed and named according to some historical or natural aspect of the trail. Trail 1 will be named the Old Forest Trail since it meanders among stands of 170 year old oak and beech trees. The sign will provide brief information about the trail and its geography. Trail 2, the trail with the new kiosk and trail head sign, will become the Orchard

Trail. The sign provides a history of the land enclosed by the trail. This land was first lived on by Eliphalet and Margaret Stevens and their 14 children and developed into an orchard. Four of their children are buried near this trail. The rough hand cut wood beams that support the roof structure of the Oak Grove Shelter came from the remains of the Stevens barn. Trail 3 will become the Fallen Timber Creek Trail and provide some brief information about Leander Webster who established a saw mill along the old Fallen Timber Creek Road which traveled through the Fallen Timber Creek Valley and underlies the trail.

A second kiosk has been built and will soon be erected. The park staff will determine the trail and location to which it will be assigned.



2014 Volunteer of the Year Award: Rex Whiteleather – Salamonie Lake

Article and photos by Salamonie Lake Staff



Long time volunteer Rex Whiteleather (pictured left) volunteers at Salamonie almost weekly, logging more than 20 hours each month. He has served as a campground host in the horse camp, an ambassador and communication leader between property staff and horse riders, and a volunteer at special events on the property.

Since retiring, Rex has increased his volunteerism and is inspiring others to join him. For example he recently brought another volunteer out in inclement weather to help property staff install a shelter house that was reclaimed from Roush. He took DNR chainsaw training and with other volunteers as spotters, he has been cutting hazard ash trees in the horse campground and along trails. He has also installed new horse rails to provide more room at each campsite for horses. This increases revenue to the property because the improved amenities.

When the service crew at Salamonie doesn't have a project for him to work on, he will go to the Interpretive Center and assist in projects there. During the Eagle Watch events, he helps with parking more than 200 vehicles. Each February he cooks for over 75 people at the Cowboy Gathering. At the monthly Senior's luncheon, you will find Rex making coffee, moving chairs and tables, and visiting with attendees. He invests heart and soul into the Salamonie Riders' Rendezvous each September. During this event, Rex helps set up the state park tents including table arranging and decoration of the welcome area. He leads a Cowboy Coffee program with special "stand up in the pot" coffee over the fire and works tirelessly through the weekend with his family to make sure this annual event is always a success. He assists with many other events throughout the year



And to top it off, Rex is currently working on a grant request to help improve signage on Salamonie's trails so that riders will have better success navigating over 20 miles of trails.

Rex is a valuable volunteer and Salamonie appreciates all his efforts!

2014 Volunteer of the Year Award: Carl & Brenda Harris – Lincoln SP

Article and photos by Lincoln State Park staff



Carl and Brenda Harris (pictured left) have been the Campground Hosts at Lincoln for 10 years. Every year Carl and Brenda begin their camp host duties the week leading up to Memorial Day weekend and work throughout the summer into the late fall. Carl and Brenda regularly can be found going through the campground cleaning fire rings and picking up litter. Both assist in the gate during all busy times and are regulars in assisting with special events and programs. Carl has helped alert campers when storm warnings are issued and helps with cleanup afterwards. In addition to those duties, Carl's background is in electricity and he assists in checking electrical problems and assisting campers in correcting any issues their camper may be having. Carl and Brenda often answer customers' questions and are very customer-friendly.

After our housekeeping staff has left for the day Carl and Brenda frequently check the bath houses to insure they are clean and well stocked with toilet paper. They regularly replace rolls of toilet paper that are too small to "make it through the night" and then Carl re-rolls these small rolls into a larger roll for future use. This is done in his spare time as he sits around the fire. Whenever a customer complains about a mess being made in one of the bath houses, Carl and Brenda are always quick to clean up that mess. Their work in the evenings to keep things looking nice has added to the overall camping experience for our guests. Dedicated? Believe it!



Carl and Brenda have become an important part of the team here at Lincoln. They work many hours beyond the minimum year after year. Their help is a big reason the operation of our campgrounds runs smoothly. We greatly appreciate everything Carl and Brenda do!

Native Plant Sale Success!

Submitted by Phil Hallenbeck, President, Mounds State Park Friends

Photos by Jerry Byard, Friends member and Volunteer

The 2015 Mounds State Park Friends Native Plant Sale was a great success. The total sales for the plants and some crafts came to \$4685, the largest sale we have ever had! A big thanks goes to Loretta Heiniger, our driving force behind this accomplishment, as well as to many other friends and volunteers who worked hard on this project. We will be at it again next May.



Left: Loretta Heiniger, in center of picture with gray jacket, is a Master Gardener and Mounds State Park Friends member. She starts many of the plants from seed and cares for them at her house which is across the street from the park. She has vast knowledge of plants and is a valuable member to the Friends group.



Left: The plants are grouped together to make it easy for visitors to choose their favorite. People need to get there early! The healthy, native plants go fast.



DNR

The mission of Indiana's State Parks and Reservoirs is to manage and interpret our properties' unique natural, wildlife and cultural resources using principles of multiple use and preservation, while sustaining the integrity of these resources for current and future generations.



Volunteers still needed for the Ford Hoosier Outdoor Experience!

The Midwest's largest outdoor recreational event is searching for volunteers. The 2015 event will take place at Fort Harrison State Park in Indianapolis on September 19 and 20. This free, family-friendly event runs from 10 am-6 pm each day and offers more than 50 different outdoor activities.

Volunteers will be assigned to help in five-hour shifts with one of the many on-site activities such as fishing, mountain biking, canoeing, archaeological dig and more. Come experience one of the greatest events of the year!

Contact volunteer coordinator Cheryl Hampton, (317) 233-1002, champton@dnr.in.gov. Visit us online at www.hoosieroutdoorexperience.IN.gov or facebook.com/hoosieroutdoorexperience..

